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Subject: For Review: First Draft of Water Release
Date: Saturday, September 2, 2017 8:47:37 PM

Below, please find a first draft of a release on the status of water systems in the Harvey affected area. I highlighted the areas where I need some help with numbers. Please review this and let me know if you have thoughts or edits. This is just a first draft and I am a little tired, so edits are welcome. **The goal is to get this out first thing tomorrow morning.** Thank you – Liz

STATUS OF WATER SYSTEMS IN AREAS AFFECTED BY HARVEY

WASHINGTON (September 3, 2017) – Working together, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) continue to coordinate with local, state and federal officials to address the human health and environmental impacts of Hurricane Harvey and its aftermath, especially the water systems in the affected areas. As of Saturday, September 2nd, 2017, the following information is available:

- **Drinking Water:** Of the approximately XX drinking water systems in the affected area, 1757 systems are fully operational, 98 are partially operational, with a “boil water” notice, and 49 continue to have outages. The agencies are contacting 189 systems to gather updated information of their status. Additional drinking water assessments should be up and running within the next day.
- **Waste Water and Sewage:** Currently, 794 of approximately XXX wastewater treatment plants are fully operational in the affected counties. The agencies are aware that releases of wastewater from sanitary sewers that is occurring, due to the historic flooding and are actively working to monitor facilities that have reported spills, conduct outreach and provide technical guidance to all other wastewater facilities in flood-impacted areas. EPA and TCEQ are working closely with the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. National Guard, the Texas State Guard, and other local and state agencies to continuously monitor wastewater systems. Houston’s unified command will be up and running shortly to support water testing.
- **Residential Wells:** EPA is developing a plan for sampling and monitoring residential wells, and is coordinating with TCEQ to provide updates to the community on the status of water from residential well water.
- **Critical Water Infrastructure:** The agencies are continuing to work closely with the

dams; some of the smaller dam systems have failed; while all the large water dams are full and may be releasing water, the structures seem to be secure at this time.

- **Flood Water:** Water quality sampling is focused on industrial facilities and hazardous waste sites. Floodwaters may contain many hazards, including bacteria and other disease agents. Precautions should be taken by anyone involved in cleanup activities or any others who may be exposed to flood waters. These precautions include heeding all warnings from local and state authorities regarding boil water notices, swimming advisories, or other safety advisories. In addition to the drowning hazards of wading, swimming, or driving in swift floodwaters, these waters can carry large objects that are not always readily visible that can cause injuries to those in the water. Other potential hazards include downed power lines and possible injuries inflicted by animals displaced by the floodwaters.

Additional EPA/TCEQ updates include:

- **Superfund Sites:** EPA and TCEQ continue to get updates about the status of specific sites from the parties responsible for ongoing cleanup of the sites. The most recent information can be found [here](#).
- **Air Quality Monitoring:** Monitors are showing that air quality at this time is not concerning and local residents should not be concerned about air quality issues related to the effects of the storm. Due to quick action and proper preparation by local authorities, all the station ambient air quality monitors in the network from south of Corpus Christi, to Belmont, and all the impacted areas were protected before the storm. Since then, local authorities are working to get the systems up and running again. As of Saturday, September 2, over 70 percent of the monitors are up and working again; and authorities expect that the network will be fully operational again by next week.
- **Fires at Arkema Facility in Crosby, Texas:** EPA and TCEQ are coordinating closely with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, along with local public safety officials. Due to the increased risk of unpredictable fires at the remaining trailers, experts on the ground decided that the best course of action was to ignite a controlled fire for the remaining trailers on Saturday evening, September 2nd. As a result of initial chemical fires from the facility, EPA has collected downstream surface water runoff samples at four locations outside the evacuation zone, near residential areas. EPA will continue to take additional samples of the flood water in the vicinity of the plant, to document changes in the concentration of chemicals. In addition, EPA will maintain a 24-hour presence at the incident command operations center near this facility, to support local emergency personnel on the ground. The 1.5 mile radius evacuation zone remains in effect until local emergency response authorities announce it is safe.

For additional information from TCEQ, please visit:
<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/response/hurricanes>

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